

In th Claims

Please amend the claims as follows:

78. (Previously Presented) A method of forming a void region associated with a substrate, comprising:

providing a substrate;

forming a sacrificial mass over the substrate;

forming a layer over the mass; and

subjecting the mass to conditions wherein a component of the mass transports from the mass into the layer to form a mixture of the layer and the component, and wherein transporting the component leaves an enclosed void region between the substrate and the mixture of the layer and the component.

79. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 78 wherein the layer comprises silicon nitride.

80. (Previously Presented) A method of forming a void region associated with a substrate, comprising:

providing a substrate;

forming a sacrificial mass over the substrate;

forming a metal-comprising layer over the mass; and

subjecting the mass to conditions which transport a component of the mass to the metal-comprising layer, the transported component being alloyed into the metal-comprising layer and leaving a hermetically-sealed void region between the metal-comprising layer and the substrate.

81. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 80 wherein less than all of the sacrificial mass is transported to the metal-comprising layer.

82. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 80 wherein substantially all of the sacrificial mass is transported to the metal-comprising layer.

83. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 80 wherein the metal-comprising layer comprises one or more of vanadium, zirconium, titanium, tantalum and iron.

84. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 80 wherein the metal-comprising layer comprises one or more of titanium or tantalum, wherein the component is carbon, and wherein the component is alloyed as one or both of a metal-carbide and a solid solution.

Please add the following new claims:

81 85. (New) The method of claim 78 wherein the layer is configured to absorb the component of the sacrificial mass.

86. (New) The method of claim 78 wherein an amount of sacrificial mass that is transported is a function of absorptive capacity of the layer.

87. (New) The method of claim 78 wherein the layer comprises a metal-comprising layer.

88. (New) The method of claim 87 wherein the metal-comprising layer comprises one or more of vanadium, zirconium, titanium, tantalum, iron.

89. (New) The method of claim 78 wherein rate of transport of the mass into the layer is a function of rate of diffusion of the component from the mass into the layer.

81 90. (New) The method of claim 78 wherein rate of transport of the mass into the layer is a function of rate of hydrogen permeation through the layer to reach the mass.

91. (New) A method of forming a void region associated with a substrate, comprising:

forming a sacrificial material over the substrate;

forming a metal comprising layer over the material; and

subjecting the material to conditions wherein a component of the material transports from the material into the layer to form a mixture of the layer and the component, and wherein transporting the component leaves an enclosed void region between the substrate and the mixture of the layer and the component, wherein rate of transport of the material into the layer is a function of rate of diffusion of the component from the material into the layer.

92. (New) The method of claim 91 wherein the metal comprising layer comprises one or more of vanadium, zirconium, titanium, tantalum, and iron.
